

**INTERNATIONAL MESSENGERS
ENGLISH READING TIME - #5.2**

5.2

TEACHER'S EDITION - New Living Translation

LESSON 1: JESUS REVEALS HIMSELF AS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

John 10:6-21

- I. Read the passage out loud to your students with feeling.
- II. Read the passage as a chorus with your students. Listen for those who have difficulty staying together so that you can restart as a group.

JESUS' LOVE AND
CARE FOR US

III. Alternative methods:

- A. Let a beginner read the passage in native tongue.
- B. If your lowest speaker can even slightly converse, do **not** have the passage read in the national language. Instead, starting with the top student, have each student translate a verse of the passage from modern English to modern national language until the passage is finished. You will **not** need to work on vocabulary after this step.

IV. Teach them any background information or cultural context you feel is critical to understanding the passage.

Background: Teacher's Notes: Jesus had been speaking to people that were spiritually blind but thought they knew the truth. They were religious but lost. The sheep pen was a court surrounded by walls. There was only one entrance. The walls kept the sheep from wandering and protected them from wild animals. By being the gate, Jesus is saying that He's the only way into salvation. The thieves and robbers represent false teachers and false religious leaders, and the one ultimately behind them: Satan. In the Bible "know" means to have a close intimate relationship. This kind of relationship results in obedience. The proof that we know is that we obey.

Questions:

1. What is the purpose of a fence? What is the purpose of a gate in a fence?
2. What three promises about life did Jesus make to those who came through Him as the gate to safety? (vv. 7-10)
3. How would the people have thought of Jesus differently if He had said He was the fence?
4. Contrast the purposes of the thief with the purposes of Jesus? (v. 10)

5. We have seen through Jesus' life and through history that persecution and martyrdom are often a part of walking with Him. What could "life in all its fullness" mean?
6. What role did Jesus use to describe Himself in v.11? Make a list of the qualities that He used to describe His role in vv.11-14.
7. Do these qualities make Jesus trustworthy or not trustworthy as a gate to eternity? Why?
8. Jesus called Himself "the Gate" and "the Good Shepherd." How would this sound coming from a normal man?
9. Review the qualities and promises He used to describe Himself as the Gate and the Good Shepherd. How are these qualities different from a normal man?
10. Read the description of Jesus' life in Phillipians 2:5-9. Compare this statement with what He said about Himself in vv.17,18. How are they similar?
11. Look back through the text for the relationship of the sheep to the gate and to the shepherd. What does Jesus say about how the sheep is related to these?
12. Why do you think Jesus used sheep in this example?
13. What were the two main reactions to Jesus' statements? (vv. 19-21)

LESSON 2: JESUS EXPLAINS THE ATTITUDE WE NEED TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Luke 18:9-17

FAITH VS. WORKS

I. Read the passage out loud to your students with feeling.

II. Read the passage as a chorus with your students. Listen for those who have difficulty staying together so that you can restart as a group.

III. Alternative methods:

A. Let a beginner read the passage in native tongue.

B. If your lowest speaker can even slightly converse, do **not** have the passage read in the national language. Instead, starting with the top student, have each student translate a verse of the passage from modern English to modern national language until the passage is finished. You will **not** need to work on vocabulary after this step.

IV. Teach them any background information or cultural context you feel is critical to understanding the passage.

Background: This parable is an attack on self-righteousness which is thinking that you've done enough good works to earn God's acceptance. Jesus wants to show us that we must be humble in approaching God like the tax-collector who asked for forgiveness not on the basis of works, but on the basis of God's mercy. The Pharisees were the most pious people in Jewish society. They believed that God's grace extended only to those who kept the law, and they looked with contempt upon people they considered to be "sinners." The tax-collectors were the most despised group in society. They were considered to be traitors and collaborators with the enemy. Humility is having the right attitude about oneself. It's seeing and accepting the truth about oneself. In this case it's recognizing that we're sinners and can never earn our way to heaven. To be justified means to be declared not guilty. God considers us to be righteous because of our faith. The Kingdom of God is where God rules. It came and was made visible in the person and deeds of Jesus. It has a present aspect - men's hearts (those who trust Him for forgiveness) and a future aspect - heaven. The Kingdom will grow and encompass the whole universe. Then the whole world will know and recognize who Jesus is.

Questions:

1. What was the description of Jesus' audience in this story? (v. 9)
2. What do you think "self-confidence" means in this context?
3. How do you think the world compared these two characters in the story? (v.10)
4. What two adjectives are used to describe the characters? (vv. 10,11)

5. Why do you think the Pharisee prayed? What was his purpose for praying?
6. What does the Pharisee's prayer tell us about his view of himself, and what does it say about his view of God? (vv.11,12) Make a list of both views.
7. Describe how the tax collector approached God. (v.13)
8. Why do you think the tax collector came to pray?
9. Read the tax collector's prayer. Describe his view of himself. Describe what he knew about God from his prayer.
10. How did God view the two men? (v.14) Why?
11. Which of these men really knew God, the religious man or the tax collector?
12. Think through how the two men left the temple that day. How were their hearts different from when they entered the temple?
13. Retell the account of vv.15,16 in your own words.
14. Describe the faith of a child. How is this faith different from an adult's faith?
15. Does faith mean throwing away reason? Does childlike faith utilize trust or naivety or both?
16. What do the little children and the tax collector have in common?
17. What do both stories teach us about God and how we can know Him?

LESSON 3: JESUS SHOWS US GOD'S HEART OF LOVE

Luke 15:1-10

I. Read the passage out loud to your students with feeling.

GOD'S LOVE FOR US

II. Read the passage as a chorus with your students. Listen for those who have difficulty staying together so that you can restart as a group.

III. Alternative methods:

A. Let a beginner read the passage in native tongue.

B. If your lowest speaker can even slightly converse, do **not** have the passage read in the national language. Instead, starting with the top student, have each student translate a verse of the passage from modern English to modern national language until the passage is finished. You will **not** need to work on vocabulary after this step.

IV. Teach them any background information or cultural context you feel is critical to understanding the passage.

Background: The Pharisees were the most pious people in Jewish society. They believed that God's grace extended only to those who kept the law, and they looked with contempt upon people they considered to be "sinners." They also believed you were guilty by association: associating with sinners made you a sinner. Jesus wanted to teach them God's view. Mankind is lost in that we're separated from God and condemned to eternal death. The world is already condemned, since we're guilty of sin, and therefore it doesn't need to be condemned again with Jesus' coming; it needs to be saved. That's why Jesus came. In some languages there is no translation for the word "repentance." It's usually translated as "penance" which is different. Therefore, it's important to explain its meaning (to agree with God that something is a sin, to regret doing it, to decide not to do it again). It's important to explain how repentance is part of believing. Here's an illustration: Let's say that God is in one direction, and I'm walking in the opposite direction (living my own life away from God). If I want to know God, I must first turn around and start walking in His direction. The turning around represents repentance, and the walking in God's direction represents faith. I can't walk towards God without first turning around. In the same way, I can't believe in God without first repenting.

Questions:

1. What caused Jesus to tell these stories? (vv. 1-2)
2. Why do you think the Pharisees and teachers were bothered by Jesus' actions?
3. Why do you think the tax collectors and "sinners" spent so much time listening to Jesus teach?
4. Who do the shepherd, the neighbors and sheep represent? (vv. 3-7)

5. List the ways that the shepherd demonstrated His love for the sheep.
6. Who do the woman, the neighbors, and the lost coin represent? (vv. 8-10)
7. List the ways that these parables tell us that we are valuable to God?
8. What causes heaven to rejoice? Why?
9. Therefore, what does lost mankind need to do in order to be found?
10. How do these stories answer the Pharisees' objections in verse 2?
11. What can we say about God's attitude towards sinful mankind on the basis of these stories?
12. How does John 3:17 relate to these stories?
13. What major difference do these parables point to between Biblical Christianity and the other religions of the world?

LESSON 4: SEEING THE BIG PICTURE

John 1:1-18

JESUS IS THE WORD

I. Read the passage out loud to your students with feeling.

II. Read the passage as a chorus with your students. Listen for those who have difficulty staying together so that you can restart as a group.

III. Alternative methods:

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B. If your lowest speaker can even slightly converse, do **not** have the passage read in the national language. Instead, starting with the top student, have each student translate a verse of the passage from modern English to modern national language until the passage is finished. You will **not** need to work on vocabulary after this step.

IV. Teach them any background information or cultural context you feel is critical to understanding the passage.

Background: Explain the idiom “see the big picture.” The Apostle John begins his Gospel of Jesus by generally describing who Jesus is. He gives us the big picture before he starts sharing the details about the purpose and person of Jesus. John introduces us to the term the Word, Greek “logos”. To the Greek, logos was the rational principle guiding the universe and making life understandable. The Old Testament Jews saw this word logos as the word of the Lord, an expression of God’s wisdom and creative power. By this time in Jewish history, logos was also viewed as coming from God and having God’s personality! John’s theme for this book is light. In John 8:12, Jesus is visiting Jerusalem during the Festival of Shelters and during this Festival 16 gold bowls were filled with oil and lit. In this passage Jesus stood beneath these bowls and announced that He was now the light of the world and that this light leads to life. John comes back to this theme many times in his writings about Jesus and God’s character, In I John 1:5 he comes back to say that “God is light and in Him is no darkness” What a wonderful clear picture for us of God’s holy character and person and used here in John 1 to tell us that, God in the flesh, Jesus Christ is the light for all men.

Questions:

1. In verses 1 and 2, Jesus is called the “Word.” What do we learn about Jesus in these verses?
2. When was the beginning? (vv. 2) What word picture comes to your mind with this verse? Why does this verse make our minds open up to a new page?
3. List what John writes about Jesus in verses 3-5.
4. A. What was John the Baptist’s purpose? Who sent him? (vv. 6-9)

B. What was John the Baptist promising to the world? (vv. 9)

5. What stands out to you from the statements made in v. 10?

6.
 - A. How did Israel, God's chosen people, generally respond to His son, Jesus? (v. 11)

 - B. Compared to the rest of the world, what advantages did they have to trust Jesus as God's Son?

 - C. How do you think God felt, and feels now? Read Luke 19:41-44. What does this tell you about the heart of God?

7.
 - A. Though the world did not generally recognize Him and His own people rejected Him, there were some who believed and put their trust in Him. What privilege was given to them? (vv. 12)

 - B. What were they believing about this man, Jesus? (vv. 1-4)

8.
 - A. How does verse 13 describe these people who trusted in Jesus? What do you think that means?

 - B. How could you tell if someone was "reborn?" Read the conversation in John 3:3-8.

9. What do these verses tell us about Jesus? (vv. 14-15)

10. How was this person, Jesus, God's unfailing love and faithfulness? (vv. 16-17)

11.
 - A. How can a person know what God is like? What (logos) message did the life of Jesus explain? (v. 18)

 - B. If you wanted to know God better what could you do?

12. Read Colossians 1:15-22. How unique is Jesus? Would anyone compare to Him? Why or Why not?

LESSON 5: THE REASON HE CAME

Mark 2:1-17

JESUS - FULLY GOD

- I. Read the passage out loud to your students with feeling.
- II. Read the passage as a chorus with your students. Listen for those who have difficulty staying together so that you can restart as a group.

III. Alternative methods:

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- B. If your lowest speaker can even slightly converse, do **not** have the passage read in the national language. Instead, starting with the top student, have each student translate a verse of the passage from modern English to modern national language until the passage is finished. You will **not** need to work on vocabulary after this step.

IV. Teach them any background information or cultural context you feel is critical to understanding the passage.

Background: The longest span of an excavated home in Capernaum is six meters, so there were up to 50 people squeezed into this house plus others listening outside the building. The roofs of these homes were strong enough to hold people walking, as they were normally made of branches laid over the roof's beams and covered with dried mud. Jewish teachers knew that only God could forgive sins. Tax collectors were despised by religious people. Levi was most likely a customs agent for Herod Antipas. When Jesus saw "their" faith, "their" included the paralytic's faith as well. Could it be that this paralytic actually came to Jesus for forgiveness? Jesus' forgiving him before healing him shows how our most pressing need is spiritual, not physical. This incident shows that Jesus has the authority to forgive sins (and no priest was needed). The Pharisees were a strict group within Judaism that believed that God's grace extended only to those who kept the law. They set out to interpret the law for the people, adding many rules of their own. They looked with contempt upon people they considered to be "sinners."

Questions:

1. How did the townspeople react to Jesus' return to Capernaum? (vv.1,2)
2. A. What was Jesus doing with the people who had gathered at the house where He was staying? (v. 2)

B. What do you think could have caused them to be this anxious to hear His teaching?
3. A. Why do you think the four men brought the paralyzed man to Jesus? (vv. 3-4)

B. Describe some of the difficulties of their task.

C. Would the man have wanted to come for some other purpose than healing? If so, what would that have been?
4. What was Jesus' response to the paralyzed man? Why? What had He seen in the four men who brought the paralyzed man? How was this evident? (v. 5)

5. How did the religious teachers react to what Jesus had done? What did they accuse Him of? (vv. 6-7)
6. Who was Jesus claiming to be here? Why were the religious leaders offended?
7. List some possible reasons why Jesus forgave the paralytic's sins before healing him. What was the man's greatest need--forgiveness of his life's sins or the healing of his legs?
8. Why did Jesus heal the man? (v. 10) What did this prove regarding Jesus' identity?
9.
 - A. What was the reaction of those in the house? (v. 12)
 - B. What might your reaction have been?
 - C. How do you think his friends on the roof reacted?
10.
 - A. Where did Jesus go after leaving the house? (v. 13)
 - B. What did He do when He arrived there?
11.
 - A. Who was Levi and what was Jesus' invitation to him ? (vv. 14-15)
 - B. What were and are tax collectors known for?
 - C. What was Levi's response to Jesus' invitation? Do you think he was surprised that Jesus invited him?
12.
 - A. Why do you think it was surprising to the religious leaders that Jesus would invite someone like Levi to be His disciple and would eat with Levi and his friends? (v.16)
 - B. What did Jesus have and what was He probably like to make notorious sinners want to eat with Him?
13.
 - A. What was Jesus' response to the religious leaders? (v. 17)
 - B. What do you think Jesus meant by this response?
 - C. What does this statement say about the type of people that are able to put their trust in Jesus for their forgiveness and eternal life?

LESSON 6: JESUS' RESPONSE TO THE DEATH OF A FRIEND

John 11:17-27, 32-46

JESUS' POWER
OVER DEATH

I. Read the passage out loud to your students with feeling.

II. Read the passage as a chorus with your students. Listen for those who have difficulty staying together so that you can restart as a group.

III. Alternative methods:

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B. If your lowest speaker can even slightly converse, do **not** have the passage read in the national language. Instead, starting with the top student, have each student translate a verse of the passage from modern English to modern national language until the passage is finished. You will **not** need to work on vocabulary after this step.

IV. Teach them any background information or cultural context you feel is critical to understanding the passage.

Background: Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha, were good friends of Jesus. Traveling to Bethany where Lazarus, Mary, and Martha lived was dangerous for Jesus and His disciples. It brought them to a region where the Jewish leaders had recently attempted to kill Jesus. Jesus had offended the Jewish religious leaders on many occasions, and by this point, many of them were trying to have Jesus arrested or killed.

Terms: **Messiah:** The expected king and deliverer of the Jews. The word "Messiah" is interchangeable with "Christ."

Indignation: Anger or scorn resulting from injustice (appears in v. 33). (In NIV says, "He was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.")

Questions:

1. How long had Lazarus been dead when Jesus came to his city of Bethany?

2. What was Martha's attitude about Jesus in verses 21 and 22?

3. In verses 25 and 26, what does Jesus state about Himself? What do you think is the meaning of what He said?

4. Did Martha understand the promise Jesus made in verse 23?

5. If Jesus knew He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead, how do you explain His weeping in vv. 33-35?

6. Why did Martha object to having the grave stone taken away from the door of Lazarus' tomb? (v. 39)

7. Summarize Jesus' prayer in verses 41 and 42. How would you describe Jesus' relationship with God from this prayer?

8. How did Jesus bring Lazarus back to life again?

9. How long do you think it was before anyone moved to help Lazarus out of his grave clothes?

10. List the ways you think Lazarus was changed in the way he viewed ¹life and ²death from this day forward.

11. What does this event teach us about who Jesus is? What is the most surprising to you? Why?

LESSON 7: JESUS' TENDERNESS TO THE HURTING

Mark 5:21-34

THE HEART OF JESUS
& "SIN IS SIN"

- I. Read the passage out loud to your students with feeling.
- II. Read the passage as a chorus with your students. Listen for those who have difficulty staying together so that you can restart as a group.

III. Alternative methods:

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- B. If your lowest speaker can even slightly converse, do **not** have the passage read in the national language. Instead, starting with the top student, have each student translate a verse of the passage from modern English to modern national language until the passage is finished. You will **not** need to work on vocabulary after this step.

IV. Teach them any background information or cultural context you feel is critical to understanding the passage.

Background: Jesus is now in the later phase of His public ministry. He is well-known as a teacher and healer. This passage describing Jesus' encounter with Jairus and the woman with the hemorrhage is the fourth in a series of five incidents which demonstrate Jesus' ability to destroy the powers hostile to God. Just prior to this event, Jesus has performed an exorcism for a man who was possessed by many demons. Following this incident, Jesus goes to Jairus' home and raises his daughter from the dead, completing the series of five events.

Cultural Context: It appears that Jairus was an administrator in the local Jewish synagogue (the Jewish place of worship). He was probably associated with the Jewish religious leaders who were hostile towards Jesus.

Because of the woman's bleeding, she was in a constant state of ceremonial "uncleanness" according to Jewish religious customs. Uncleanness was associated with sin. If Jewish people were unclean, they feared losing God's protection and good will. Anyone touched by a woman who was bleeding was immediately considered unclean as well. The woman in this story had probably been a social outcast for many years since no one could touch her without violating the religious laws.

Questions:

1. Retell this event in your own words.
2. Why did Jairus come to Jesus? (v. 23)
3. What risk was there for him to be seen with Jesus?

4. Why did the woman come to Jesus? (vv. 25-27) Why would it be difficult for her to get through the crowd?

5. What risk did she take to touch a teacher like Jesus? Why did she have the courage to try?

6. Why do you think this woman was afraid to tell Jesus she had touched His clothes? (v. 33)

7. Why do you think Jesus spoke to the woman as He did in verse 34?

8. List all the ways you think the woman's daily life and view of life was changed by her meeting with Jesus.

9. How is this tenderness that Jesus has shown so different from what is normal?

10. Does trusting someone always involve risk? What risk do you see in turning around towards God and trusting Jesus for your eternal life?

LESSON 8: WALKING BY FAITH

Matthew 14:22-33

- I. Read the passage out loud to your students with feeling.
- II. Read the passage as a chorus with your students. Listen for those who have difficulty staying together so that you can restart as a group.

WHAT IS FAITH? WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

III. Alternative methods:

- A. Let a beginner read the passage in native tongue.
- B. If your lowest speaker can even slightly converse, do **not** have the passage read in the national language. Instead, starting with the top student, have each student translate a verse of the passage from modern English to modern national language until the passage is finished. You will **not** need to work on vocabulary after this step.

IV. Teach them any background information or cultural context you feel is critical to understanding the passage.

Background: This event took place on the Sea of Galilee, a large lake in northern Palestine. It happened immediately following the feeding of the 5,000 near the city of Bethsaida. The crowds followed the north shore of the sea knowing they would intersect Jesus' path at some point. Jesus had recently received the news of the beheading of John the Baptist by Herod. At this point, He turned His attention to teaching His disciples who He was, for He understood that His time with them was limited. Both the feeding of the 5,000 men and their families and this event were intended for the education of the twelve. Sending them out in the boat gave Him time to be alone with God and gave them time to think about what had just happened through them. The boat was probably 5-5½ km out on the lake when Jesus walked out to join the disciples.

Questions:

1. After feeding the crowd of 5,000 men and their families, what did Jesus tell His disciples to do? (v. 22)
2. Where did Jesus go after He sent the people home? What time of day was it? Was He with other people? (v. 23)
3. What did He do there? After such a huge day, what did this indicate about Jesus' relationship with God? (v. 23)
4. What was the sea like when Jesus walked out to the disciples' boat? (v. 24)

5. How did the disciples react? (v. 26)
6. What would your reaction have been?
7. How did Jesus try to calm their fears? (v. 27)
8. What did Peter want to do when he saw Jesus on the water? (v. 28) Why?
9.
 - A. Why did Peter walk on top of the water only for part of the distance to Jesus?
 - B. What caused Peter to sink?
 - C. Did Jesus change during the middle of Peter's walk? (v. 30)
10. What did Jesus do when Peter cried out? What did He say to Peter? (v. 31)
11. How did the disciples respond to what they saw that night? (v. 33)
12. What was Jesus teaching the disciples about faith in this event?
13. What situations cause you the most fear in life?
14. What are some qualities of Jesus Christ that make Him worthy of our trust? (John 1:1-4, 14; Romans 5:8; Ephesians 5:2; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 13:8; I Peter 2:23, 24; I John 3:16a)

**WALKING THROUGH STORMS THAT THREATEN US ARE GREAT OPPORTUNITIES TO
GET TO REALLY KNOW OUR WONDERFUL LORD AND CREATOR**

LESSON 9: THE TRANSFIGURATION

Luke 9: 28-36

GOD ENCOURAGES
& AFFIRMS JESUS

- I. Read the passage out loud to your students with feeling.
- II. Read the passage as a chorus with your students. Listen for those who have difficulty staying together so that you can restart as a group.

III. Alternative methods:

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- B. If your lowest speaker can even slightly converse, do **not** have the passage read in the national language. Instead, starting with the top student, have each student translate a verse of the passage from modern English to modern national language until the passage is finished. You will **not** need to work on vocabulary after this step.

IV. Teach them any background information or cultural context you feel is critical to understanding the passage.

Background: This event was the only occasion during Christ's earthly ministry when He revealed the glory of His person. It may have occurred on Mount Hermon near Caesarea Philippi or Mount Tabor. This event helped the Father encourage the Son as He began to make His way to Jerusalem to be crucified. This event also helped fulfill Luke 9:27 by Peter, James and John seeing a demonstration of the kingdom.

"Departure" in vv. 31 means exodus or going out or away. This departure was to be fulfilled in Jerusalem with Jesus' death, then His journey to heaven.

Moses was seen as the Lawgiver who founded the nation and Elijah is the figure of the end times. Peter thought that seeing Moses and Elijah assumed that the kingdom had arrived which triggered Peter's idea to build three shelters. Peter wanted to enjoy the moment and prolong it in celebration by staying on the mountaintop for as long as possible. But Luke makes it clear that Peter had spoken wrongly because he "did not know what he was saying". Peter was correct to think kingdom and celebrate but forgot Jesus' prediction about His own death and suffering.

A cloud was often the symbol of God's divine presence. The Father interrupted Peter by filling the mountain in a cloud of glory and speaking out of the cloud. The Father again calls Jesus "My Son" from Psalms 2:7. The Father also says that Jesus is "chosen" which highlights His unique and chosen status. The Father said to "listen to Him" because the disciples still didn't understand the need for Jesus to go to Jerusalem and be crucified and suffer for their sins.

Questions:

1. Why did Jesus take Peter, James and John to the mountain?
2. What happened to Jesus' appearance as He was praying?
3. What happened in vv. 30 and 31? What did the two men speak to Jesus about?

4. Why do you think the two men came at this time? What does this reveal about God's heart?

5. What were Peter, James and John doing while this all happened?

6. What do you think about Peter's suggestion to Jesus?

7. What happened that scared Jesus' disciples so much?

8. How do you think God's words affected Peter, James and John then and in the future? How do you think those same words helped Jesus in the weeks ahead?

9. What happened after God spoke?

10. Peter, James and John all died defending the fact that Jesus Christ was God's Son and that He rose from the dead after the Romans crucified Him. How do you think this time on the mountain affected their boldness and commitment to the truth?

LESSON 10: STORY OF THE SOILS

Luke 8:4-15

FAITH THAT YIELDS
A HARVEST

- I. Read the passage out loud to your students with feeling.
- II. Read the passage as a chorus with your students. Listen for those who have difficulty staying together so that you can restart as a group.

III. Alternative methods:

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- B. If your lowest speaker can even slightly converse, do **not** have the passage read in the national language. Instead, starting with the top student, have each student translate a verse of the passage from modern English to modern national language until the passage is finished. You will **not** need to work on vocabulary after this step.

IV. Teach them any background information or cultural context you feel is critical to understanding the passage.

Background: In ancient Agrarian cultures the farmer sowed the seed by scattering it by hand over plowed soil. The parable of the Sower describes the variety of responses to witnessing and preaching of the Gospel. Initially the Sower is Jesus, but eventually it will be all believers who witness and share the Gospel. Jesus told this story to encourage the disciples in their future witnessing ministry and to encourage our witnessing today. The great crowds that followed Jesus did not impress Him. Jesus had crowds following Him for all types of reasons. Some of the crowd really were spiritually interested but most were only interested in seeing the exciting miracles and being fed free food.

Isaiah 6:9 prophesied that the Messiah would teach through parables. A parable starts off as a picture that is familiar to the listeners. But as you carefully consider the picture, it becomes a mirror in which you see yourself. This is both painful and good. This explains why some got angry and tried to kill Jesus. But if we see ourselves as needy sinners and ask for help, then the mirror becomes a window through which we see Jesus as God and trust in His blood for forgiveness of sin.

In vv. 8 Jesus ended the parable by calling out this phrase, “He who has ears to hear let him hear”. This stressed His major point: if your heart is open today, you will understand the truth behind the parable. If your heart is closed, you will be kept in the dark to the truth.

1st soil

When the seed of the Gospel, God’s good news for man, lands in a person’s heart a cosmic battle with Satan will break out.

2nd soil

Person’s initial response; quickly responds with joy, just emotionally receives the Word but when he is tempted with other activities he does not continue. The proof of salvation is fruit and not merely hearing the Word or saying we now believe in Jesus.. So this person/soil didn’t lose his salvation because he never truly decided to turn and follow..

3rd soil

Worries, riches, and the pleasures (hedonism) of this life are like weeds in a garden that keep the soil from being fruitful.. They feed our flesh with promises they can’t fulfill. They fill our lives with meaningless pursuits. Who has ever found real life in these? This is the true battle for every follower of Jesus.

4th soil

The goal for our lives is to produce fruit with Jesus. To multiply the seed of the Gospel to other people’s lives by our walk with God, our words, our lifestyle, and demonstrating a super natural love for them. This life is a joyful response to being forgiven and having eternal life. It is keeping the main thing, the main thing in our lives.

Questions:

1. Who was in the crowd for this story?

2. Who was the soil in this story?

3. What did the seed represent in this story? How many kinds of seed were in the story?

4. What determined the strength and yield of the plants? Was it the seed or was it the soil?

5. What caused the first seed not to produce a harvest?

6.
 - A. What caused the second seed not to produce a harvest? What happened to the plants that were grown from this second soil?

 - B. Why didn't they live long enough to produce a harvest? Why did their belief not take root in their lives?

 - C. What might the rock under the soft soil represent?

7. What is the description of the third type of soil? How is this seed received?

8. What keeps this third seed from producing a harvest? How is this different from what limited the second seed?

9. What characteristics does the fourth soil have? Why does it produce a steady, huge harvest?

10. What type of soil are you right now? Do you desire to produce a huge, steady harvest from your life?

LESSON 11: JESUS CLEARS THE TEMPLE & PREDICTS HIS RESURRECTION

John 2:13-25

- I. Read the passage out loud to your students with feeling.
- II. Read the passage as a chorus with your students. Listen for those who have difficulty staying together so that you can restart as a group.

JESUS TAKES ON THE
ESTABLISHMENT!

III. Alternative methods:

- A. Let a beginner read the passage in native tongue.
- B. If your lowest speaker can even slightly converse, do **not** have the passage read in the national language. Instead, starting with the top student, have each student translate a verse of the passage from modern English to modern national language until the passage is finished. You will **not** need to work on vocabulary after this step.

IV. Teach them any background information or cultural context you feel is critical to understanding the passage.

Background: At three yearly feasts (Passover most important), every Jewish worshiper had to come before God with an animal sacrifice for their sins. The priests declared that all animals for sacrifice had to be bought from them in the temple at extremely inflated prices. Plus each worshiper was required to pay a yearly temple tax that helped provide for the priests and Levites. Again the priests abused the worshipers by requiring them to pay the temple tax by exchanging their money for the only acceptable ancient Jewish coin at extremely inflated prices. Sadly these cruel and unjust practices took place right in God's very own temple. Jesus used His divine authority and righteous anger to stop these unrighteous practices. This activity fulfilled Psalms 69:9 and showed Jesus to be the Messiah.

Jesus told them a parable about destroying and rebuilding the temple. It was clear in John 2:21 that Jesus was referring to His own resurrection but the blind and hardhearted men took it to mean literally destroying and rebuilding the temple (impossible in three days). Jesus was saying that He Himself was the true Temple of God because God lived through Him. At Christ's death the curtain in the temple was ripped indicating we have direct access into the throne of God, and because Christ was the final sacrifice, the temple sacrifices were no longer needed.

Questions:

1. Why was Jesus in Jerusalem?
2. What did Jesus see in the temple that upset Him?
3. Why were the sellers and money changers there?
4. How many of these people did He chase from the temple?

5. How did He convince them to leave?
6. Why do you think Jesus was angry?
7. What question did the Jewish leaders have for Jesus after the merchants left the temple? Why did they ask Him this?
8. What did they want from Jesus to prove His authority over them?
9. What sign did He offer them? What did this prove?
10. How were they confused by His offer of proof?
11. Do you think His followers understood what Jesus said at this time? What happened in the months to come that explained this statement to them?
12. Discuss everything verses 23-25 teach about ¹Jesus, ²what the people were really looking for, and ³His unconditional love for them.

LESSON 12: THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

Matthew 3:16- 4:11

THE DECEIVER &
THE TRUTH

I. Read the passage out loud to your students with feeling.

II. Read the passage as a chorus with your students. Listen for those who have difficulty staying together so that you can restart as a group.

III. Alternative methods:

A. Let a beginner read the passage in native tongue.

B. If your lowest speaker can even slightly converse, do **not** have the passage read in the national language. Instead, starting with the top student, have each student translate a verse of the passage from modern English to modern national language until the passage is finished. You will **not** need to work on vocabulary after this step.

IV. Teach them any background information or cultural context you feel is critical to understanding the passage.

Background: At the beginning of Jesus ministry, the Father initiated a testing when the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan for 40 days. The heavenly Father declared at Jesus' baptism, "You are my beloved Son, and in You I am well pleased". The Father's approval of the beloved Son was going to be tested regarding Jesus' commitment, and dependence on the Father.

1st Temptation – Physical Needs

Satan suggested that there must be something wrong with the Father's care and love since Jesus was hungry. All sin seems to start from this point- God isn't truly good. Jesus trusted the Father to meet His needs in His own time and His own way. He trusted God's heart and love for Him. Satan wanted Jesus to disobey the Father's will by using His divine power to feed Himself. . But for Jesus to take action independent of God would have represented a lack of faith in God's goodness. Jesus countered Satan's temptation by using scripture to show God can be trusted. This temptation was the opposite of the one Satan used on Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve had everything they needed to eat and wanted more. Jesus trusted God and was victorious in the midst of needing food and having not eaten for 40 days. What Adam failed to do as a representative of all humanity, Jesus succeeded in doing as Son of God.

2nd Temptation – King of the World

Satan told Jesus He could be in control of the whole world if He would worship Satan. Satan's invitation to engage in false worship represented a challenge to the first commandment "to worship God alone." (Exodus 20:3) Satan is trying to lure Jesus into sin through offering Him power. Satan wanted to trick Jesus into rebellion which is his specialty. Satan is telling a lie because he does not have authority to offer Jesus anything. The Father had already promised to give the Son all the kingdoms of the world (Psalms 2:7-8), but first the Son had to suffer and die for our sins. Satan always lures us to sacrifice the eternal best for temporary pleasure and ease.

3rd Temptation – Demand Protection

The place Jesus was tempted to jump was at the temple's southeast corner overlooking the Kidron Valley about 450 feet (137 meters) below. Again Satan refers to Jesus as the Son of God. Satan challenged Jesus to jump, "If you are the Son, God will rescue You; if you trust God you will jump. Just let yourself go and let God care for You and experience the joy of God's certain protection." Satan twisted the Scriptures to make it appear that taking a leap would be perfectly logical. Beware - Satan knows how to use or misuse the Bible. He tried to

convince Jesus that the Jewish people would immediately make Jesus King if they saw Him survive this jump.g. Jesus refuses to demand God's protection for such a demand is not real faith but it is sin. Jesus was confident that God was with Him and that the Father's plan and timing was perfect for Him He also knew that He had to go to the cross and die for the sins of the world before He would be King.

Satan didn't depart permanently from Jesus but continually attacked Jesus throughout his ministry. Jesus' success over temptation proved that He was God in human flesh. The key to Jesus' triumph is His faithfulness in walking with God wherever God leads Him, even in the midst of testing times. To love God is to be faithful to Him, worshiping and serving only Him. Temptation is Satan's weapon to defeat us, but it can become God's tool to build us (James 1:1-8,13-17).

Questions:

1. What two things happened to Jesus at the time of His baptism?
2. What three things did God communicate in the words He spoke?
3. What effect do you think this had on His life and His relationship with God?
4. Why did Jesus go into the wilderness?
5. How long did He go without eating?
6. Who tempted Him there?
7. What was the first temptation about? Why was this temptation powerful at this time?
8. How did Jesus answer Satan's temptation? How was faith in God's love for Him involved in this answer?
9. What were the conditions of the second temptation? What lie was in this temptation?
10. What was Jesus' answer? Why was Jesus' answer the best answer for this temptation? What did it reveal about Jesus' heart and relationship to God, His Father?
11. What was the third temptation? Why do you think Satan used this temptation at this time?
12. What was Jesus' answer?
13. How often did Satan argue with Jesus' answers? What was the main similarity of each answer?
14. Read Hebrews 4:15 and James 4:7. How do they fit in with this study?

LESSON 13: JESUS, THE WAY TO GOD

John 14:1-11

THE UNSELFISHNESS & TENDERNESS
OF JESUS TOWARD HIS FOLLOWERS

I. Read the passage out loud to your students with feeling.

II. Read the passage as a chorus with your students. Listen for those who have difficulty staying together so that you can restart as a group.

III. Alternative methods:

A. Let a beginner read the passage in native tongue.

B. If your lowest speaker can even slightly converse, do **not** have the passage read in the national language. Instead, starting with the top student, have each student translate a verse of the passage from modern English to modern national language until the passage is finished. You will **not** need to work on vocabulary after this step.

IV. Teach them any background information or cultural context you feel is critical to understanding the passage.

Background: Jesus was within hours of being arrested. He had just a few hours to comfort and prepare His disciples for the trauma ahead. He had already told them that they would all abandon Him, that He would be crucified, that He was going away, and that Satan was working against all of them. They were in a state of confusion and depression. Jesus loved His disciples and had a heart to help them work through all that they were trying to understand. He understood it was going to get even worse for them in the next few days. He assured them that He was God in the flesh and that He would come back to get them someday. He reminded them of the reality of heaven and of the basics of establishing their relationship with God through faith in Him. This was the time for them to start basing their faith in Him on fact and not feelings or sight. Romans 1:17, Romans 10:17, I Timothy 2:5, Acts 4:12, John 8:32, and I John 5:11, 12 and 13 are excellent verses to work into this study.

Questions:

1. What is the cure for a troubled heart? (v. 1)
2. Where did Jesus say He was going, and why was He going there? (v. 2)
3. What assurance did Jesus give His disciples that what He said was true? (v. 2)

4. What did Jesus tell His disciples He would do for them? (v. 3)

5. How could this affect their attitudes about life?

6. What did Thomas ask Jesus? (v. 5) Why did he ask this?

7. How did Jesus say the disciples could come to God and have a relationship with the Father? (v. 6) Did He say there were other ways to be secure in your relationship with God?

8. Who did Jesus say that His disciples would know if they really knew Him? What truth was He teaching them here? (v. 7)

9. How would you describe Jesus' relationship with the Father from verses 10 and 11?

10. Make a list of ways these truths from today's study could affect the disciples' lives during the terrible events of the next few days.

11. Look up Hebrews 7:25, Acts 4:12, I Timothy 2:5 and John 8:32. Discuss how they tie in with John 14:6 from today's study.

LESSON 14: JESUS' CONVERSATION WITH PILATE

John 18:28-40

BEING A LOVER
OF TRUTH

- I. Read the passage out loud to your students with feeling.
- II. Read the passage as a chorus with your students. Listen for those who have difficulty staying together so that you can restart as a group.

III. Alternative methods:

- A. Let a beginner read the passage in native tongue.
- B. If your lowest speaker can even slightly converse, do **not** have the passage read in the national language. Instead, starting with the top student, have each student translate a verse of the passage from modern English to modern national language until the passage is finished. You will **not** need to work on vocabulary after this step.

IV. Teach them any background information or cultural context you feel is critical to understanding the passage.

Background: Israel was under the bondage of Rome. Israel was given a degree of freedom to govern their own people, however, not the freedom to execute people. Early the next morning the Jewish religious leaders, after having decided that Jesus must die, went to get permission to execute Christ from Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor over Israel. The Jewish leaders wanted to move quickly before all the Jewish people would be alarmed to find out that Rome pronounced Jesus guilty and crucified Him. Pilate was a weak man who had many complaints about him given to Caesar in Rome and was afraid of losing his job. Pilate was not anxious to get involved in a Jewish court case, so he tried to evade the issue. It is ironic that the Jewish leaders were concerned with ritual uncleanness entering the house of a Gentile while they planned murder! What hypocrisy to not enter a Gentile home and yet want to kill the Messiah. This is a picture of our hearts. In verse 37 Jesus says He “was born,” showing His 100% humanity, and Jesus said He “came into the world,” showing His preexistence and His 100% deity.

Barabbas was a murderer, robber, and insurrectionist. Yet the crowd showed its great fickleness when it cried, “Hosanna” one day, and “Crucify” and “we want Barabbas” the next. Amazingly God purposely moved history for Rome to take over Israel so that Jesus would not die of Jewish stoning but Roman crucifixion and fulfill prophecy, Galatians 3:13, Psalms 22:14-17.

Questions:

1. When did Jesus' trial before Caiaphas end?
2. Where did His accusers take Jesus after His trial?
3. Why did Pilate need to come out of His headquarters to meet with the accusers of Jesus?

4. Why did the Jewish leaders bring Jesus to Pilate?
5. Were they interested in justice?
6. What was Pilate's attitude as he questioned Jesus?
7. What emotions do you find in Jesus' answers?
8. What proof did Jesus offer that He was not an earthly King?
9. What Kingdoms were in conflict here?
10. What Kingdom was Jesus speaking about?
11. List some reasons that people reject truth.
12. What description did Jesus use to describe the people that believe in His eternal Kingdom?
13. Why is it wise to love the truth?
14. What did Pilate reveal about himself by his question "What is truth?"

LESSON 15 - JESUS APPEARS TO MARY MAGDALENE

John 20:11-18

REALITY OF THE
RESURRECTION

I. Read the passage out loud to your students with feeling.

II. Read the passage as a chorus with your students. Listen for those who have difficulty staying together so that you can restart as a group.

III. Alternative methods:

A. Let a beginner read the passage in native tongue.

B. If your lowest speaker can even slightly converse, do **not** have the passage read in the national language. Instead, starting with the top student, have each student translate a verse of the passage from modern English to modern national language until the passage is finished. You will **not** need to work on vocabulary after this step.

IV. Teach them any background information or cultural context you feel is critical to understanding the passage.

Background: Mary Magdalene was devoted to Jesus because He had delivered her from bondage to seven demons. Early on Sunday, the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and other women went to the tomb to finish the burial preparation for Jesus' body. The tomb was closed with a large rock door and sealed by the authority of the Roman governor Pontius Pilate. Mary Magdalene got to the tomb first and concluded that somebody had broken into the tomb and stolen the body. Jesus' first resurrection appearance was to her. No **Jewish author at this point in history** would have invented a story with a woman as the first witness to this most important event. Some, in trying to understand Mary's inability to recognize Jesus, say Jesus' appearance was changed; others say she had a temporary blindness. Jesus spoke to Mary – as the Good Shepherd calls His sheep by name (John 10:3). She immediately responded with “Rabboni” – Master, Lord. This Aramaic word was seldom used of men and mostly used about God. Mary was saying that Jesus is God.

The Old Testament Mercy Seat was where God met man between two angels on top of the Ark of the Covenant where the blood is sprinkled. (Exodus 25:17-22) The New Testament Mercy Seat is the resurrected Christ's tomb where Mary found two angels sitting in the tomb on either side where the body would have been lying.

Questions:

1. Why was Mary at the tomb? Why was she crying?
2. How many angels were in the tomb? What question did they ask Mary?
3. What was Mary's relationship with Jesus? (vv. 13)

4. How did Mary see Jesus? Did she know it was Him?

5. How did Mary recognize Jesus? Why do you think she didn't recognize Him when He asked her a question but did recognize Him when He spoke her name?

6. What message did Jesus ask Mary to give to the disciples?

7. What do you think He was trying to say with "my Father and your Father, my God and your God" in that message?

8. What changed Mary in this encounter?

9. What do you think went through her mind as she ran to tell the disciples?

LESSON 16: JESUS ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Luke 24:13-35

THE RESURRECTED CHRIST

I. Read the passage out loud to your students with feeling.

II. Read the passage as a chorus with your students. Listen for those who have difficulty staying together so that you can restart as a group.

III. Alternative methods:

A. Let a beginner read the passage in native tongue.

B. If your lowest speaker can even slightly converse, do **not** have the passage read in the national language. Instead, starting with the top student, have each student translate a verse of the passage from modern English to modern national language until the passage is finished. You will **not** need to work on vocabulary after this step.

IV. Teach them any background information or cultural context you feel is critical to understanding the passage.

Background: This account took place on Sunday, the day that Jesus rose from the dead. Emmaus was a village 12 km west of Jerusalem. Jesus used this time with these two disciples, (His followers), to show them from the Old Testament what had happened during the past week. Afterwards, they hurried back to Jerusalem to confirm the resurrection to the other disciples. The book of Luke was written by Doctor Luke around 60 A.D. Luke wrote in a very detailed way and a very orderly manner. He was very careful to get the facts from people who were actually witnesses of the event. He was also present at many of the events he wrote about. He wanted those who read his letter to have the truth in a very understandable form.

Questions:

1. Have you ever experienced anything in life where your sorrow turned to joy?
2. Who was going to Emmaus? (v. 13)
3. What were the two men discussing along the way? (v. 14)
4. Who appeared to the men on the way to Emmaus? (v. 15) How did He come beside them?
5. What did Jesus ask the two men? (v. 17)

6. What emotions did the two men show? (v. 17)

7. Did Cleopas recognize Jesus? (v. 18) What do you think was going through his mind in this verse?

8. Tell in your own words how the two men described Jesus and what had happened that weekend in Jerusalem. (vv. 19-24)

9. How had the events of the last few days crushed the hopes of the two men? (v. 21)

10. How did Jesus respond to their sorrow? (vv. 25-27) Was He angry, shocked, or just trying to get their attention? Why do you think He used the method of going back to the writings of Moses and the prophets?

11. What was their unbelief costing them that day?

12. When did the men finally recognize Jesus? (v. 31) Why did this cause them to remember Him?

13. Why was it important for Jesus to prove He was alive to people other than His closest disciples?

14. How would the knowledge that Jesus was alive impact the lives of His followers?

LESSON 17: JESUS' PICTURE OF ETERNITY

Luke 16:19-31

THE REALITY OF JUDGMENT

I. Read the passage out loud to your students with feeling.

II. Read the passage as a chorus with your students. Listen for those who have difficulty staying together so that you can restart as a group.

III. Alternative methods:

A. Let a beginner read the passage in native tongue.

B. If your lowest speaker can even slightly converse, do **not** have the passage read in the national language. Instead, starting with the top student, have each student translate a verse of the passage from modern English to modern national language until the passage is finished. You will **not** need to work on vocabulary after this step.

IV. Teach them any background information or cultural context you feel is critical to understanding the passage.

Background: Jesus addressed this story to His disciples and the Pharisees. The Pharisees believed that money was a sign of God's approval of one's life, so they sneered at Jesus' teaching on the importance of looking at the heart of people rather than their affluence. Money ruled their lives, and they saw Jesus as a poor man followed by other poor people. Many see this story as an actual historical event and not as a parable because the Lord used the man's name in the story which He didn't do in other parables. The Pharisees still wanted signs to prove Jesus was God's Son, but the point made was that if they refused to believe Scripture, then they would never believe by seeing miracles. A few weeks later, Jesus raised His friend Lazarus from the grave, and it only accelerated the religious leaders' desire to kill Him. When believers died, they went to Paradise to be with Abraham. Unbelievers (those who are not followers of Christ) went to a place of torment where the dead are punished until Judgment Day (Revelation 20:11-15).

Questions:

1. How are the two main men described in this story?

2. What did the angels do in this story? (v. 22)

3. Where was the rich man after he died? Why did he ask Abraham to send Lazarus to him? (vv. 23, 24)

LESSON 18 : THE GOSPEL

God's Purpose:

God wants to walk with you.

- 1) *Psalm 139*
Isaiah 43:25

Read these passages and look for the purpose of our creation by God.

- 2) *John 10:10*

What “fullness” of life did Jesus come to give?

- 3) *Romans 5:1*

What else can we have because of what Jesus has done for us?

- 4) *John 3:16*

What other kind of life did Jesus come to give?

(How did He define that life? *John 17:3*)

Our Problem:

Separation from God - Our decisions to not obey God separate us from Him.

- 5) *Isaiah 59:2, 64:6*

What is our condition before a Holy God?

- 6) *Romans 3:23*

Can anyone say he has not sinned?

- 7) *Romans 6:23*

What is the result of our sin? What is this death?

God's Solution:

The Cross.

- 8) *Romans 3:20-26* What is God's plan to make us right in His sight?
- 9) *Romans 5:8* Who did Jesus die for?
- 10) *I Timothy 2:5* Draw this verse on a sheet of paper.
- 11) *I Peter 3:18* Why did Jesus suffer on the cross?

Our Response:

Put your trust in Jesus Christ and turn from disobeying God.

- 12) *Rev. 3:20* What does Jesus want to do in our lives?
- 13) *John 1:12* If we accept Jesus as our Lord and our way to forgiveness, what do we become?
- 14) *I John 1:9* How are we made right with God?
Romans 3:22
Acts 20:21
Romans 10:9,10

Assurance

Promises to build around.

- 15) *I John 5:13* Can we know we are going to heaven? How?
Hebrews 7:25
Eph 3:12
Romans 8:1
Romans 5:1